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THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY
OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Religious Education

by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

The Problem Stated. The writer in this study traces the development of the present youth movement of the Free Methodist Church of North America and in so doing seeks to gain insight into the structure and "modus operandi" of the movement. She also tries to appraise the contribution made by the movement to the life of the Free Methodist Church.

Importance of the Study. In the opinion of the writer, the youth movement of the Free Methodist Church is now of such magnitude that it calls for at least a brief, comprehensive study. Such orientation to the youth work of the Church, moreover, should prove valuable to all persons interested not only in the spiritual well-being of young people but in the advancement of the Kingdom of God among men generally.

Definitions of Terms Used. Throughout the thesis, the writer consistently refers to certain organizations in abbreviated form only. These abbreviated forms are the ones used by the members generally and by the official bodies of the Church. Partly because of such familiarity and partly to save tedious repetition of long organizational titles, the Junior Missionary Society will be referred to as the

J. M. S., the Young People's Missionary Society as the Y. P. M. S. and the Women's Missionary Society as the W. M. S..

Reference is occasionally made to the three levels of organization within the Church: the local, the district and the conference levels. The reader is to understand that the local refers to a single organized church at a given location. The district includes those churches within a certain geographical area; in most cases the district includes at least six local societies. The conference is the largest of the three units or levels. It may cover a state or parts of several states, and includes two or more district organizations.

Previous Related Studies. In 1943 Howard D. Rose wrote a thesis entitled A Comparison of Young People's Organizations in the Holiness Churches. As the subject indicates this was essentially a comparative study.

In her book, The Story of Fifty Years (1935) Carrie Turrell Burritt has a brief chapter on the work of the young people in the Church.

In The Story of Our Church, the Reverend Carl L. Howland has a summary chapter on the Y. P. M. S. movement.

The General Young People's Missionary Council has edited and issued an official handbook which contains a brief historical sketch of the beginnings and progress of

the youth movement of the Free Methodist Church.

The present study tries to give, at least in certain respects, a more detailed account of the movement, bringing it down almost to the present time; it also seeks some evaluation of the movement as it is today.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL

Prior to 1903 there was no youth movement as such in the Free Methodist Church. Work with young people was carried on in connection with children's work in general, and the whole was sponsored by the Women's Missionary Society of the Church.¹

In the face of much criticism, Bishop Wilson T. Hogue and a few other leaders advocated a youth program distinct from the Church's program for children in general. As a result of their efforts, at the 1903 General Conference of the Church held in Greenville, Illinois a committee of ten on "Children and Young People" was appointed to study the matter. This committee in its report to the Conference stated that although it had nothing to recommend, ^{there should be} an organization for "Christian work and self-improvement" which would include both young and old. Since the Discipline of the Church made no mention of this recommendation, and since no provision for its promotion seems to have been made, the indication is that the proposed plan was not received with enthusiasm.

¹ Carrie Turrell Burritt, The Story of Fifty Years (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1935), p. 192.

It is true that about this time one or two attempts were made locally to create a young people's society. The churches in Albion and Jamestown, New York made moves in this direction. The Albion Young People's Society has records and minutes from June 14, 1904. Bishop Pearce refers to the existence of a society during the years, 1904-1905. Active in this latter society were several persons who later became missionaries. They include Mrs. Mary O. Schlosser, China, Mrs. G. W. Mills, Dominican Republic, Miss Edith Frances Jones, China, and Mata D. Allee, India.

The Reverend M. L. Root of the Washington Conference tells of organizing a youth group while he was pastoring at Deer Flat, Idaho in 1910. Of the fifteen members of that group, many became prominent ministers, missionaries and laymen.²

Undiscouraged by initial efforts to form young people's societies, Bishop Hogue continued at subsequent General Conferences to petition for a distinct youth organization. Each time his effort failed; it was felt generally that youth societies would bring worldliness into the church.³

² General Y. P. M. S. Council, It's Time You Knew (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1952), p. 16.

³ Burritt, op. cit., p. 192.

During the second decade the executive committee of the Women's Missionary Society was realizing the need of a youth organization in connection with the missionary work of the church. As a result, in 1919 the Young People's Missionary Society came into being. Mrs. Emma L. Hogue was elected general superintendent of the new organization.⁴ During the first four years of its existence only local societies were formed, most of the promotional work being done by personal correspondence. To help integrate this new unit into the Church's program, the conference presidents of the W. M. S. were instructed to contact the superintendent of each Y. P. M. S. in the local churches. The movement gained steadily. At the close of the first quadrennium in 1923 there were 200 local societies, a total membership of 3,208 and the sum of 12,000 contributed. The work of these first societies was comprised chiefly of mission study, Bible study and the conducting of missionary programs.⁵

The membership continued to grow. The young people soon were asking for greater responsibility and for expansion of their activity. They felt the need for mutual fellowship and cooperation among themselves as Y. P. M.

⁴ Ibid., p. 191.

⁵ Ibid., p. 193.

Societies. They believed that if local units were united, a more effective program could be maintained. To this end they asked that local grouping be united into district and conference units.

With a view to complying with these requests, a committee of five was appointed to prepare a tentative constitution and by-laws. These were adopted by the General Conference at the quadrennial meeting in 1923. A handbook was ordered prepared, to contain the constitution and by-laws. This constitution, with a few changes and additions was used by the Y. P. M. S. for the next twelve years, during which time the organization was auxiliary to the W. M. S.

Incidentally, at this 1923 quadrennial meeting some attempt was made by a number of General Conference members to replace the Y. P. M. S. with a more inclusive young people's society. With the failure of this effort, the society continued to function for the next several years much as it had been functioning.

The first constitution of the Y. P. M. S. lists the following objectives:

1. To seek and maintain among its members the highest type of Christian experience and life, through the regeneration and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
2. To interest, train and enlist the young people

in the evangelization of the world field

3. To study the needs of the various fields and become intelligent supporters of the full missionary programs.
4. To raise money for objects sanctioned by the general authorities of the church and in ways thoroughly in accord with its discipline.⁶

The payment of one dollar a year entitled one to membership, and the payment of fifteen dollars constituted life membership. All young people of good moral character, fourteen years of age or over, could become members of the society.

Within three months after the constitution was sent out, fifteen conferences reported that they had organized. Southern California was first and Oregon second.

The first Y. P. M. S. summer conference was held on the camp ground at Glen Ellyn, Illinois on July 6-8, 1926. The Illinois, Iowa, Michigan and Wisconsin conferences cooperated in this conference. The Chicago district sponsored the meeting and Mrs. Lillian B. Griffith, the district Y. P. M. S. superintendent, supervised the activities.

During the second quadrennium, 1923-1927, the General Young People's Missionary Society held a number of institutes and conventions. At the close of this period there were thirty-seven conference societies, 330 local

⁶ Ibid., p. 195.

societies, a total membership of 6,208 and a fund of \$56,000 raised. These figures show substantial increases over the figures for the close of the first quadrennium, 1923.

Both among the young people and their elders, intense feeling mounted for the formation of a youth organization whose primary interests should not necessarily be missionary. Because of this pressure, the General Conference of 1927 voted approval of a Young People's Society to be under control of the Church but to in no way replace the Young People's Missionary Society, which was to continue to function under the leadership of the W. M. S.⁷ The Young People's Missionary Society was to confine itself to missionary activities only, while the new society was to concern itself with other activities not particularly missionary in character. All local churches were urged to have the two societies.

In spite of the difficulties of maintaining two youth organizations in a Church relatively small in membership, at the close of the third quadrennium of its existence there were forty-two conference units of Y. P. M. Societies, 433 local societies, and a total of 7,180 members. Total offerings for this third quadrennium amounted

⁷ Howard D. Rose, "A Comparison of Young People's Organizations in the Holiness Churches," (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Winona Lake School of Theology, 1943), p. 41.

to more than \$100,000. Much of the credit for the success of the work goes to Mrs. Lillian B. Griffith who, as general superintendent of the Y. P. M. S., worked untiringly in the organization of conference societies.

The newly-formed Young People's Society progressed slowly at first. In some churches friction arose because of the existence of two youth groups. A few leaders of the Church urged the Women's Missionary Society to turn the Young People's Missionary Society over to the Church, advising that the missionary emphasis be modified. The W. M. S. was reluctant to do this. The majority of the young people themselves did not want the "M" of the Y. P. M. S. removed. There came about a general feeling within the Church that one society for the young people would best serve the interests of the Church. A joint committee on young people composed of representatives of both the Y. P. M. S. and the Y. P. S., leaders from the Church, and a committee from the Young People's Missionary Society held conferences at the 1931 general session for the purpose of seeking a solution in the matter of young people's organizations. Finally they arrived at what seemed to them the solution; that was, to merge both youth societies and place them under the auspices of the Church rather than under the W. M. S., the new organization to be called the Young People's Missionary

Society.⁸

An important step forward was taken when at the first meeting of the combined youth organizations a Y. P. M. S. Council was formed. The new Council was made up of an executive committee composed of the following: president, Y. P. M. S. superintendent, recording secretary, treasurer, general secretary of missions and ten members from the Commission on Missions of the Free Methodist Church.⁹ The first executive committee of the Y. P. M. S. Council was composed of the following persons: F. W. Griffith, president; Lillian B. Griffith, Y. P. M. S. Superintendent; June H. Howland, recording secretary; Helen I. Root, Treasurer and W. B. Olmstead, General Secretary of Missions.

This first re-organized Y. P. M. S. Council ordered study books published. It decided that representation at quadrennial meetings should include one delegate from each conference, with an additional delegate from those conferences having more than six hundred members. The suggested age limits for Y. P. M. S. membership was from fourteen to thirty, but the matter of age was to be treated with flexi-

⁸ Carrie Turrell Burritt, The Story of Fifty Years (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1935), p. 209.

⁹ Annual Minutes (Chicago, Illinois: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1931), p. 296.

bility as the case demanded.¹⁰

The 1932 Council met in Chicago at the Free Methodist Publishing House. At this meeting, it expressed strong disapproval of Y. P. M. S. meetings partaking too much of the nature of mere social gatherings. It frowned on the use of costumes and pageantry in youth meetings and discountenanced the raising of money by other than tithes and offerings. The Council discussed problems that the Y. P. M. S. was facing. Some of the obstacles were in the form of outspoken opposition from certain pastors and laymen who were accused of treating the new organization too lightly. Another problem was that of finding time during the week for youth meetings, and particularly for fitting the Y. P. M. S. time of meeting into the quarterly conference and campmeeting schedule. There was the problem of sensitiveness of the young people themselves to being crowded out at such times. Notwithstanding these difficulties the Council was encouraged; for in the one year's operation of the merged organizations, regional institutes were created. These were held at Greenville College, Central College and Los Angeles Pacific College.¹¹ Gains during this period, though not sensational, were sufficient to bring encouragement.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 321.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 290-298.

The third year (1933) of the merger marked the beginning of a period of rapid growth. In this year, two reading courses were published and a correspondence course for leadership training was inaugurated.¹²

During 1933-34, when plans were being made to move the publishing house of the Church, the Y. P. M. S. felt that its growth as a society called for adequate space in the new publishing house. This request was granted.¹³

At Winona Lake, at the 1935 General Conference of the Church the Reverend Benjamin H. Pearson was elected by that body as General Superintendent of the Y. P. M. S., and for the first time two regional secretaries were chosen from the delegated body to serve as field representatives and youth evangelists. Ernest Keasling was to serve the conferences West of the Mississippi, and Robert Burgess those conferences to the East. A general Council of the Y. P. M. S. was created at this time to include a bishop, the general superintendent of the Y. P. M. S., two regional secretaries, the General Missionary Secretary and two representatives of the Women's Missionary Society.¹⁴ The

¹² Ibid., (1933), p. 294.

¹³ Ibid., (1934), p. 281.

¹⁴ Young People's Missionary Society, It's Time You Knew (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1952), p. 16.

quadrennium goal was set-up to include: (1). Slogan, "Every member a Christian, every Christian a soul-winner." (2). Evangelism in each local society. (3). Five hundred extension Sunday schools. (4). Fifteen thousand Y. P. M. S. members. (5). \$125,000 for missions. (6). Twenty thousand paid-up penny-a-day pledges. (7). Service training in every society. (8). Youth leadership for younger young people. (9). Available library for every society. (10). The use of the delegate system for every conference and convention. (11). A Y. P. M. S. on every circuit. (12). Every local church represented at a regional conference.¹⁵

The regional secretaries were instructed to spend their time in promotional and evangelistic work throughout their bounds. Their support was to come from the fields they served.¹⁶

The year 1936 showed a solid gain generally. The missionary aspect of the merged Y. P. M. S. was not neglected. That year a goal was set of one thousand Y. P. M. S. mission members on foreign fields, and a missionary budget set at \$35,000. The possibility was discussed of a youth conference west of the Mississippi, to be called the Western Youth Advance, and plans for it were formulated. New

¹⁵ Annual Minutes, op. cit. (1935), pp. 285-293.

¹⁶ Ibid. (1935), p. 285.

emphasis was placed upon personal evangelism, and it was decided to advertise widely a text book entitled, Winning Others.¹⁷ Reading and service training were again stressed. One program book had been published with the promise of another to follow, Sunday Evenings with Jesus. To stimulate growth and development through competition a plan for rating Y. P. M. S. conference organizations was developed. This 1936 annual council also made provision for such expansion as would include high school youth. It discussed plans for a world gathering of Free Methodist Youth, and made arrangements for such a meeting to be held in 1939.¹⁸

Major changes affecting the Y. P. M. S. which were made at the General Conference of the Church in 1939 were these: making the general superintendent of the Y. P. M. S. a full-time officer, changing the title "regional secretaries" to "regional directors," and adding two more regional directors. The personnel of the general council was revised to consist of the General Superintendent of the Y. P. M. S., who should serve as chairman, and four regional directors, who should function under the Church's Commission on Christian Education. The regions under the leadership of a director were to be identified as Southern, Canadian,

¹⁷ Ibid. (1936), p. 295.

¹⁸ Ibid. (1937), p. 303.

Eastern, and Western. The East and West retained their regional directors while Gerald Overholt was added as Southern Regional Director and E. A. Cooper as the Canadian director.¹⁹

The Y. P. M. S. Council of 1940 arranged for the preparation of a third edition of the Y. P. M. S. Constitution. It also discussed the need of a Y. P. M. S. periodical and planned for its publication in 1941, under the name of the Y. P. M. S. News.²⁰ Until this time Y. P. M. S. news was supplied free of charge as a supplement to the youth Sunday school paper, the "Light and Life Evangel."²¹

With the beginning of World War II when large numbers of the young men enlisted in the military service, the Y. P. M. S. Council began to concentrate on the younger adolescent group, those fourteen to eighteen years of age. The Council decided that all Y. P. M. S. programs, activities and services were to be placed on the fourteen-eighteen year level.²²

In 1943 the Reverend Ernest Keasling was elected to replace Mr. Pearson who resigned for missionary service in

¹⁹ Young People's Missionary Society, It's Time You Knew (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1952), p. 16.

²⁰ Annual Minutes, op. cit. (1940), p. 322.

²¹ Young People's Missionary Society, op. cit., p. 101.

²² Annual Minutes, op. cit. (1942), p. 307.

South America.²³

Meantime, because of the war, the absence of so many youth from some churches made the operating of some of the local organizations almost impossible.

By 1945 there was a decrease of forty-three in the number of societies. The financial contributions, however, had substantially increased notwithstanding. This increase is to be accounted for in part by the substantial increase in wages that the war brought. In view of the returning service men and the relaxation of war-time restrictions, more extensive plans were being made by the Society.²⁴

In 1946, at the war's end, the general outlook for youth was more encouraging in spite of post-war adjustments. Free Methodist young folks showed increased interest and aggressiveness in the total Church program. In this year, by official action of the Commission on Christian Education, the Church Council for Men in Service was merged with the Y. P. M. S. By further action of the commission, the Y. P. M. S. servicemen's department made plans to continue to keep in touch with those men still in uniform. The 1946 total for Y. P. M. S. members in the Servicemen's Service roster was 16,792. Of these, 497 fatalities were reported.

²³ Ibid. (1943), p. 323.

²⁴ Ibid. (1945), p. 340.

The outstanding business of the annual Y. P. M. S. Council was its intensive planning for the first post-war World Youth Advance to be held in connection with the General Conference of 1947 at Winona Lake, Indiana. This Council also made provision for the creation of a service library.²⁵

The World Youth Advance of 1947 marked a high-spot in the history of the Y. P. M. S. The slogan of the conference, "Spirit-Filled Youth challenges Pagan Youth," emphasized new world-wide evangelistic objectives. At this advance, significant achievements were the introduction of the Charter Plan, enlarging the general Council with four lay representatives and streamlining the Constitution. The Charter Plan is a plan for rating local Y. P. M. S. organizations according to activity and accomplishments. According to this plan there are three levels of achievement above the beginning or charter stage.²⁶

The annual Council of 1948 reported success for the Charter Plan. For instance, Y. P. M. S. members were showing greater interest in and responsibility for the progress of the Church. In the same year the Y. P. M. S. published its official handbook, a mission-study entitled, The Full

²⁵ Ibid. (1946), pp. 347-352.

²⁶ Young People's Missionary Society, It's Time You Knew (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1952), p. 65.

Years, also a thirty-four page mimeographed collection of Bible-centered programs for youth. Youth action conferences were introduced in which the use of the demonstration method in teaching replaced the lecture method. During this year an effort was made to contact and spiritually assist Free Methodist students on non-Free Methodist university and seminary campuses. To assist in this work a roster of these students was established in the Y. P. M. S. office.²⁷

In 1949, General Superintendent Ernest Keasling reported holding twenty-five Youth Action Conferences. By that year, film service dealing with missions, education and evangelism made visual aids available to all youth groups;²⁸ and the Y. P. M. S. Council made plans for launching a Mid-Century Crusade. Among the Crusade objectives were the following:

- I. A series of Mid-Century Youth Crusade rallies across North America to be conducted by the general superintendent and regional directors.
- II. A series of city-wide youth revivals with Bishop C. V. Fairbairn advising.
- III. A Mid-Century Youth Camp for the training of youth leaders to be held in Winona Lake in the summer of 1950.
- IV. Launching a mobile unit of the Mid-Century Crusade of the Y. P. M. S.

²⁷ Annual Minutes, op. cit. (1948), pp. 376-379.

²⁸ Ibid. (1949), p. 366.

- V. Releasing a new evangelistic film, "Time for Action," which pictures the Y. P. M. S. on the local.
- VI. One broadcast of the Light and Life Hour to feature the Mid-Century Youth Crusade.
- VII. A net increase of 50 new societies for 1950.
- VIII. Fifty youth teams throughout the church to crusade for Christ.
- IX. Enlisting 100 Christian Youth for service during the summer of 1950.
- X. A Mid-Century Youth Convention to be held in each conference.
- XI. A study on the book of Acts to be conducted by each local Y. P. M. S.
- XII. At least one Crusade Team in each local society to conduct such activities as home visitation, personal meetings, and tract distribution.
- XIII. The organization of at least 100 high school Bible Clubs.
- XIV. A mission study on Japan in each local society.
- XV. A campaign to secure 5,000 active members as tithers.
- XVI. Observance of Youth Week, January 29-February 5, 1950.²⁹

At the eighteenth annual session of the Y. P. M. S. Council in 1950, it was agreed that for 1951 the Mid-Century Youth Crusade should become a World Youth Crusade. Under the new set-up, crusade teams were to be organized for evangelizing foreign countries; emphasis was to be

²⁹ Ibid., p. 375.

placed upon youth in "Free Methodist" mission fields; and plans were made to reach youth in new fields in the United States, Canada and Alaska.³⁰ One result of this larger emphasis was a conference of Japanese and American servicemen in the Far East in connection with the 1952 Youth for Christ Congress.

The 1951 annual session of the Council set up a four-focus program. The four-fold foci were: focus on the Bible, focus on advance, focus on world-wide evangelism and focus on prayer.³¹

Twenty-one years (1931-1952) have shown rapid progress in the youth movement of the Free Methodist Church. What was once a loose appendage has now become a vital part of the life and ministry of the church. This development may be seen more clearly in the following table which shows the year-by-year progress of the Y. P. M. S. numerically and financially.

³⁰ Ibid. (1950), pp. 18-21.

³¹ Ibid. (1952), pp. 22, 23.

TABLE I

DEVELOPMENT OF THE Y.P.M.S. AS SHOWN BY ITS NUMERICAL
GROWTH AND FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Year	No. Locals	Active Membership	Contribution to Missions	Total Contribution
1931			\$12,366.22	\$ 24,971.67
1932	542	8,394	\$12,682.99	\$ 20,634.91
1933	631	10,050	\$ 9,995.67	\$ 17,067.84
1934	702	11,402	\$18,094.56	\$ 27,274.52
1935	620	9,382	\$12,623.70	\$ 30,076.20
1936	699	10,516	\$14,754.98	\$ 31,985.86
1937	698	11,115	\$17,230.54	\$ 32,196.11
1938	716	14,758	\$16,952.25	\$ 31,866.83
1939		16,000		\$ 31,000.00
1940	813	15,436	\$20,711.63	\$ 38,711.63
1941				
1942	842	16,952	\$24,793.01	\$ 56,292.59
1943	750	15,552	\$22,186.18	\$ 74,508.02
1944	786	14,119	\$34,062.78	\$107,229.07
1945		15,034	\$44,786.96	\$137,261.24
1946	876	20,268	\$45,521.30	\$157,505.28
1947	750	16,841	\$48,597.31	\$137,574.09
1948	832	10,574	\$41,002.79	\$106,758.60
1949	852	11,335	\$42,137.72	\$101,188.78
1950	749	11,018		\$ 93,348.03
1951	821	10,770		\$ 98,834.80
1952	803	10,713		\$123,715.35

CHAPTER III

THE MOVEMENT TODAY

The statement in the Free Methodist Discipline accounting for the origin of the Y. P. M. S. at the same time mentions the general policy of the organization:

To promote the spiritual welfare of the young people connected with the Free Methodist church, and to provide direction for their Christian activities, and to help them in their contribution to the church and to the world, there shall be an organization known as the Young People's Society of the Free Methodist Church of North America.¹

The slogan of the Y. P. M. S., "United to Make Christ Known," expresses the Society's general feeling of responsibility for bringing men to Christ. The promotional slogan for the present quadrennium (1950-1954) sums it up in this way, "Local Expansion for World Evangelism." There has been a growing conviction on the part of leaders generally in the Free Methodist Church, and among the Society's leaders in particular, that the Y. P. M. S. should play a significant role in the program of world evangelism.

The Discipline goes on to list more specifically the objectives of the Society as follows:

1. To seek and maintain among its members the highest type of Christian experience and life through

¹ Doctrine and Discipline of the Free Methodist Church of North America (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1952), Article 1, p. 86.

regeneration and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, to encourage growth in grace, and to prepare them for efficient membership in the Free Methodist Church.

2. To interest, train, and enlist the young people in the evangelization of the world.
3. To study the needs of the various fields and become intelligent supporters of the full missionary program.
4. To encourage Christian stewardship and raise money for projects sanctioned by the general authorities of the church in ways consistent with the DISCIPLINE of the Free Methodist Church.²

It is a matter of interest to note that the Y. P. M. S. is helping to meet certain responsibilities which heretofore have given great concern to the Church. For instance, the Church has been anxious to reach the great army of twelve-to-sixteen-year-olds, till now lost to the Christian church. The Society has been particularly challenged by this loss.

The Y. P. M. S. is more than an activity program; it is a school in which young people are developed for Christian leadership. Through it the worthwhileness of personal evangelism is being realized by youth. Through it, members in the United States and Canada are rapidly gaining a world vision; for they reciprocate views with Society members in Africa, China, India, Japan, Mexico, the Philippines, South

² Ibid., Article III, pp. 86,87.

America and the West Indies.

I. ORGANIZATION

The Y. P. M. S. of the Free Methodist Church functions on four levels: local, district, conference and quadrennial.

According to 1952 statistics, the Society is made up of more than eight hundred local societies, each averaging twenty members. Because of its united efforts the Y. P. M. S. has been able to send hundreds of young people into the ministry and to the mission fields. It has promoted hundreds of evangelistic activities and contributed thousands of dollars toward world-wide evangelism.³ Conditions of membership are as follows:

Active members shall be young people of good moral character between the ages of fourteen and thirty inclusive, who desire to unite for worship, instruction, and service under the direction of the Free Methodist Church.

In some societies the lack of young people has made it necessary to include those who have passed their thirty-first birthday. Such adults are often used in official capacity as needed, and they are considered honorary members of the Society.⁴

Local Y. P. M. S. At the local level, officers of

³ Young People's Missionary Society, It's Time You Knew (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1952), p. 23.

⁴ Discipline, op. cit. Article IV, p. 169.

the society include the president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer and four departmental directors of these respective areas of interest: education, evangelism, missions and the armed services.⁵ Along with the officers, the local pastor directs the activities of the local youth group.

The requirement that the president must be a member of the Free Methodist Church does not imply that he must be a member in full connection. A preparatory member may serve as president. The duties of the president are those of leader and organizer. He is chairman of the executive committee and confers with other officers on plans for youth activities, presides over business meetings and is open to up-to-date methods and procedures, makes certain that the other officers know their work and do it and relays information to and from the pastor. A good president will coordinate the activities of the Y. P. M. S. with the other church activities; he cooperates with district and conference Y. P. M. S. officers and makes arrangements for the election of officers and committees. The president must be exemplary in Christian life and conduct.⁶

The local vice-president is the public-relations

⁵ Loc. cit.

⁶ Loc. cit.

man. It is his responsibility to see that the programs are worthwhile and that they are well-planned.

The secretary's job demands promptness and efficiency. Besides reporting regularly to district and conference officers, he must keep check on the progress of the society under the Charter Plan.

Managing the financial interests of the organization makes of the treasurer a business manager. It is part of his job to see that the local group raises annually an increasing amount of money for world-wide evangelism. Under the Charter Plan each society is to seek a ten per cent increase over its total giving for the previous six month's period.

Part of the work of the director of education is to stimulate more and better reading, especially Bible reading. He is to furnish informative educational programs on doctrine, the Bible, the church, personal and social responsibilities and stewardship. He will also cultivate thinking through the encouragement of writing, oratorical contests and debates. He seeks to popularize the Y. P. M. S. film service. He urges young people to attend Christian schools, and furnishes them with information concerning higher education.⁷

⁷ Young People's Missionary Society, It's Time You Knew (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1952), pp. 36, 37.

Evangelism is felt to be the main business of the Church. The director in this field sponsors the "League of Intercessors," a movement whose aim is to pray for a world-wide revival of religion. He encourages Bible memorization and the work of personal evangelism.

The director of missions is to make the young people "missions-conscious." He does this through mission study, using visual materials, planning missionary conventions and rallies, and acquainting the young people with Free Methodist missionaries.

The director of service is to see that young people abide by their motto, "Others." The promotion of service around the local church, the community and the home is his task. The director is responsible for keeping in touch with the young people who are away at school or who are in military service. He promotes observance of Servicemen's Day.

From a consideration of local society organization, we turn now to glance at one or two other matters pertaining to the local Y. P. M. S.

Y. P. M. S. meetings are conducted weekly, usually at the hour preceding the Sunday evening service. Business meetings are held at least once in three months. All program materials and other activities must be in conformity with the standards set forth in the Discipline of the Free

Methodist Church.⁸

Money is raised by tithes and free-will offerings to support interests approved by the church. Each local organization is responsible for raising the Youth Fund, a fund used primarily for the operating expenses of the Y. P. M. S. headquarters at Winona Lake, Indiana. Here several secretaries are in full-time service, corresponding with members and officers of the Y. P. M. S. and in touch with missionaries, pastors and other church leaders.

Each month all local church contributions raised for general evangelism and education are turned over by the Y. P. M. S. treasurer to the local church treasurer. These are applied on the church's quota for these departments as assessed by the general board of the Church.⁹

The local Y. P. M. S. executive committee is composed of the regularly elected officers of the society, the pastor, the superintendent of the Y. P. M. S., and a representative of the Sunday School Board. This committee directs the activity of the society and is responsible to the official board of the church. A program committee comprises the vice-president as chairman, and such other members as are elected from the executive committee. On every committee the presi-

⁸ Discipline, op. cit., Article IV, pp. 87, 88.

⁹ Ibid., p. 98.

dent of the society is considered an ex-officio member.¹⁰

District Y. P. M. S. The initiative in making a move toward a district Y. P. M. S. is with the district.¹¹ District Societies as such are the organized media between the local and the conference Y. P. M. Societies. Several local societies, the numbering varying from conference to conference, comprise a district society.

Membership in a local society constitutes membership in the district organization of the Y. P. M. S., where one exists. The district quarterly conference elects the district Y. P. M. S. superintendent who, with the executive advisor, is responsible for the activities of the district Y. P. M. S. The executive advisor is a district superintendent of the church. The final decision concerning the organization of a district Y. P. M. S. is left to the conference Y. P. M. S. body. Where there is no district Y. P. M. S. a man may be elected to the conference Y. P. M. S. executive committee to promote such an organization.¹²

The district promoter, the district Y. P. M. S. superintendent and the executive advisor form the executive committee pro tem where there is no official Y. P. M. S.

¹⁰ Loc. cit.

¹¹ Ibid., Article IV, p. 89.

¹² Discipline, op. cit., Article V, pp. 169, 170.

organization.

District activities include monthly rallies, youth revivals, district institutes, district fellowship and work meetings. The district executive committee cooperates with the conference executive committee in promoting conference interests throughout the district.

Conference Y. P. M. S. The conference organization serves to tie the local groups together as a unit. Y. P. M. S. membership in a local society constitutes membership in a conference society.¹³

At each annual conference, a Y. P. M. S. superintendent is elected by the Church Conference. Nominations for the superintendent may be made by the conference Y. P. M. S. body. The superintendent must be a member of the Free Methodist Church and above the Y. P. M. S. age limit. He and the Conference Superintendent are responsible for the organization of the Conference Y. P. M. S. These two officers and the duly elected Conference Y. P. M. S. president are responsible for the promotion of all youth activities during Conference time as well as for choosing Conference projects to be carried out during the ensuing year.

The conference executive committee is made up of the

¹³ Ibid., p. 90.

officers of the conference Y. P. M. S., the district presidents or promoters, the conference superintendent of the Y. P. M. S., and one or more executive advisors. This committee is responsible for directing the activities and promoting the interests of the Y. P. M. S. throughout the conference.¹⁴

The president of a conference organization of the Y. P. M. S. leads the entire youth group of his conference area. His duties include the following: presiding at conference business meetings, seeing that the conference officers understand and execute their duties, supervising the function of each committee, maintaining an aggressive conference program, and visiting in his area as many local churches as possible. He is responsible for the growth of the Y. P. M. S. in his conference. He tries to coordinate district youth activities by working in close cooperation with the local presidents; and he keeps in close touch with the Conference Superintendent.

A conference vice-president acts as advisor to local vice-presidents. He may suggest program ideas, and plan training periods for local vice-presidents.

Conference secretaries relay reports from local societies to the Y. P. M. S. headquarters at Winona Lake.

¹⁴ Loc. cit.

They seek to promote through the local secretaries conference membership campaigns. It is their responsibility to provide an annual conference directory.

The conference treasurer is in charge of funds raised by the local societies of his conference. One of his main duties is raising the Youth Fund quota. To do so, he submits an apportionment to each local society.

The conference director of education sees that local education aims are integrated. He promotes the use of "the missionary book-of-the-year" and such other books as are approved by the conference officials. He stimulates reading, promotes conference educational contests, and encourages college-age youth to enroll in Free Methodist Colleges. He promotes a conference library when practicable and makes available the use of Service Training courses and Film Service slides.

Conference directors of evangelism are responsible for promoting the World Youth Crusade in the local churches; they organize young people into crusade teams for actual service.

The director of missions seeks to promote the missionary program of the church. He plans at least one general missionary convention for the entire conference, and arranges for a missionary motorcade to visit centrally-located local societies and churches.

The director of service is responsible to the Servicemen's Department. He arranges for the observance of Servicemen's Day. He also sees to the distribution of the Society's paper, the Y. P. M. S. NEWS.

It is the privilege of the conference Y. P. M. S. to submit nominations to the annual conference to be considered for membership on the conference Evangelistic Board. This gives the young people a voice in planning a progressive evangelistic campaign; it also makes for better understanding and support of the plans of this committee.

After the third year of any quadrennium period, each annual conference or convention may elect one or more delegates to attend the quadrennial general conference. The membership used as a basis for electing these delegates is based upon the average membership of the conference for the first three years of the quadrennium. One delegate is allowed for the first five hundred members and an additional delegate is allowed for every other five hundred.

The Y. P. M. S. Quadrennial Body. "There shall be a Y. P. M. S. Quadrennial Body, composed of conference delegates, which shall convene at the seat of the general conference."¹⁵ So reads the constitution of the Y. P. M. S.

¹⁵ Ibid., Article VII, p. 92.

To this body each Y. P. M. S. in the respective mission fields has the right to add a fraternal delegate. The Quadrennial Body is the ultimate authority for the Y. P. M. S. work of the entire Church. The executive council really is in control of the youth work of the Church.

The general superintendent of the Y. P. M. S., elected by the General Conference of the Church to serve under the Church's Commission on Christian Education, acts as a kind of liaison officer between the Commission and the Quadrennial Body. In his office at the general headquarters of the Church, he acts as an advisor to the Quadrennial Body when it is in session. He serves as executive secretary of the body when it is not in session. Although he may speak on any question he does not have the right to vote.¹⁶

The four regional directors take turns at presiding at the sessions of the quadrennial meetings. The three not presiding act as co-chairmen. Lay representatives of the Y. P. M. S. Council may enter into discussions of the Quadrennial Body; they do not, however, have the right to vote.

The business of the quadrennium is conducted largely through committees representing such phases of the work as

¹⁶ Young People's Missionary Society, It's Time You Knew (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1952), p. 90.

the constitution, education, evangelism, finance, missions and publications.¹⁷

As previously mentioned, regional directors are elected by the Quadrennial Body to promote the work of the Y. P. M. S. in their respective territories. They carry on extensive correspondence, giving help when it is needed. Their field work in the Church includes youth rallies, conventions, officer councils, training institutes, youth camps and youth revivals.¹⁸ They represent the Y. P. M. S. at denominational meetings. Because of heavy demands upon their time, they are normally not to spend more than one week in any series of meetings at one place.

The regional director is present at conference business meetings where he may act as advisor, consultant or instructor.¹⁹

It is the business of the Quadrennial Body to elect four lay members of the Y. P. M. S., one from each region, to serve on the Y. P. M. S. Council.²⁰ This lay representation is to express the laymen's point of view in meetings of the Council. It also assists regional directors in pro-

¹⁷ Discipline, op. cit., Article VII, p. 93.

¹⁸ Loc. cit.

¹⁹ Young People's Missionary Society, op. cit., pp. 91, 92.

²⁰ Discipline, op. cit., Article VII, p. 94.

moting the Y. P. M. S. in the various areas.

The Y. P. M. S. Council consists of the four regional directors, the four lay representatives and the general superintendent of the Y. P. M. S. Along with its other duties the Council plans the work of the regional directors.²¹

In this section the writer has tried to furnish an over-all view of the machinery of the youth movement of the Free Methodist Church. It seems a complex set-up. It is to be noted, however, that the Y. P. M. S. in structure is quite similar at the local, district and conference levels. The Quadrennial Body's executive council initiates the whole.²²

²¹ Young People's Missionary Society, op. cit., p. 92.

²² Discipline, op. cit., p. 71.

II. EXPANSION

RECENT PROGRESSIVE MEASURES

The Servicemen's Department was merged with the general Y. P. M. S. office in June, 1946 to continue the work of the department with a minimum of expense. At the beginning of action in Korea, the active roster for servicemen was at an all-time low of 635. By April, 1952 it had mounted to a total of more than 5,000. The work of this department is financed from a separate budget. For purposes of efficiency and economy its activities are closely integrated with the general Y. P. M. S. office program. The Department has done much in the interest of the soldiers and has helped them become the Church's "front line of evangelism." Military bases are occasionally visited by the regional directors, who generously give their time to unscheduled visits. As army men in the homeland move from one training base to another, the Servicemen's Department puts them immediately in touch with the nearest Free Methodist Church. It notifies the local pastor, who communicates with the soldier. A major task of the Department is keeping up-to-date a file of addresses of Free Methodist men and women in service.²³

²³ Young People's Missionary Society, It's Time You Knew (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1952), pp. 101,102.

The Y. P. M. S. Inter-Collegiate Fellowship is another arm of the youth work. It ministers to young men and women who are away from home attending state universities, and seminaries and colleges other than those of Free Methodist affiliation.²⁴ These young people are reached personally or by correspondence in order that they may retain their interest in the Church.

The Y. P. M. S. has organized a "Teen Age Department."

Where deemed advisable and recommended by the local Y. P. M. S. executive committee and approved by the official board, a teen-age department may be instituted which shall have the power of electing its own officers composing the local executive committee.²⁵

The Teen-Age Department was created to provide the activity needed by younger adolescents in contrast with that normally engaged in by older youth. In larger societies this move has proved highly practicable. This teen-age emphasis has broadened the scope and the influence of the Y. P. M. S.

Closely associated with the Teen-Age Department are organizations known as High School Bible Clubs. Hundreds of these clubs have sprung up within recent years.²⁶

²⁴ Loc. cit.

²⁵ Doctrines and Discipline of the Free Methodist Church of North America (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1952), Article XI, p. 95.

²⁶ It's Time You Knew, op. cit., p. 47.

They are not exclusively Free Methodist although many have been organized by Y. P. M. S. members and teachers. In some instances they have been promoted by Y. P. M. S. regional directors. Appropriate pins are available from the Y. P. M. S. office for these "clubbers."²⁷

A significant advance was made when the Y. P. M. S. launched the Charter Plan. This system was devised for the purpose of measuring achievement of the local societies of the Y. P. M. S. Upon the organization of a Y. P. M. S. society and its proper registration at the Y. P. M. S. headquarters, a charter, the official recognition of the existence of the society, is sent to the new organization. The Charter Plan, as it has come to be known, provides a list of essential Y. P. M. S. activities arranged in order of importance. There are three levels of achievement above the beginning, or Charter stage. They are C. B. and A. The highest is A, which, if a society secures, it must cooperate in activities to such an extent that spiritual growth will be the result. This is the main purpose of the Charter Plan. The Charter Plan functions with reference to three kinds of activities: required activities, improvement electives, and expansion electives. In this way, a definite kind of

²⁷ Y. P. M. S. News (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, May 1, 1953), p. 5.

appraisal is made possible of the work being done in a society. Required activities for a Y. P. M. S. under the Charter Plan include: public services held by the society, payment of the Youth Fund, private daily prayer by active members, personal Bible study by active members, the practice of tithing, attendance at regular church prayer meeting, and the completing in the society's meetings of one Bible study course a year. Improvement electives are listed as measures for cultivating new members and new societies. The expansive program is designed to encourage specific types of Christian activity among society members, such as participation in youth revivals, Daily Vacation Bible Schools, and house-to-house visitation.²⁸

A major result of the Mid-Century Youth Crusade, a concentrated effort in youth evangelism, is the more recent movement with the Free Methodist Church known as the World Youth Crusade. Summer workers are sent to ready areas; international teams are being sent to other countries. Teams of local and conference workers are encouraged to do visitation evangelism, hold gospel services, pass tracts and organize Bible Clubs. The Crusade first secures young people as signatories of the World Youth Crusade Pledge.

²⁸ Young People's Missionary Society, It's Time You Knew, (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1952), pp. 64,65.

This is a pledge to prayer, Bible study, personal evangelism, and Scripture memorization. The Crusade movement is meant to encourage young people in their prayer life, in study of the Word, and in effective witnessing.

The World Youth Crusade is carried through on local, district, conference and international levels. Those going out in international teams furnish their own financial support. Teams going to countries in which Free Methodist missions are located work with Free Methodist missionaries and native church leaders. Those teams going to lands where there is no Free Methodist work cooperate and work under Youth for Christ supervision and with native evangelical pastors.²⁹

Miscellaneous Services Rendered. In keeping with the times, the Y. P. M. S. has organized and made accessible visual aids for all levels of the Y. P. M. S. The film service furnishes missionary, educational and evangelistic films. In addition to the film service, the Society has secured dealership rights for tape-recorders, slide and movie projectors. In this way these helps are accessible to local groups at a minimum cost.³⁰ Religious services direct

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 97-99.

³⁰ It's Time You Knew, op. cit., p. 103.

from foreign fields have been made available through the tape recorder. These feature messages by missionaries as well as music by natives.³¹

Another service of the Society is the publishing of the Y. P. M. S. News. Until 1943 the Church publishing house edited and offered the News free of charge as a supplement to the "Light and Life Evangel," the adult Sunday School paper. In that year the publishing house turned the publication over to the Y. P. M. S. office, which has since become the clearing house for church news and picture collections. It serves the Y. P. M. S. in covering Y. P. M. S. operations and projects, features from the local societies, and a host of other items. It also publishes various kinds of religious literature for youth, such as mission study books, instructions for new converts and the official handbook of the Y. P. M. S. The handbook is the answer to any question which might arise concerning such matters as Y. P. M. S. organization.

Since 1948, at the request of the Church, the Y. P. M. S. General Superintendent and office staff have been working in the field of press and public relations. In this new area, the Y. P. M. S. is fast becoming a news room for all of Free Methodism. Free Methodist news from

³¹ Y. P. M. S. News, op. cit., p. 101.

all over the world is mailed, telephoned, cabled and telegraphed into the office where it is prepared for release to many denominational, religious, and secular magazines and papers. The Y. P. M. S. has its own reporters and news staff. Files of picture cuts and biographical sketches of leaders in the Free Methodist Church are maintained for those who desire them for publicity reasons.³² This office has also assumed the details of an extensive advertising department.³³

Another service rendered by the Y. P. M. S. remains to be mentioned: the raising of monies for various purposes. Y. P. M. S. missionary giving has been a means of support for many missionaries. This Society, which it will be recalled, began as a missionary society, continues to be missionary in emphasis. Y. P. M. S. contributions to missions have always compared favorably with missionary contributions of other organizations in the Church. A "Penny-a-Day" scheme has proved fruitful in raising missionary money. It has been an encouragement, especially to young people of limited means.

The Y. P. M. S. Youth Fund makes possible the functioning of the central Y. P. M. S. headquarters. Each

³² Ibid., p. 102.

³³ It's Time You Knew, op. cit., p. 101.

conference organization is responsible for raising its quota for the Youth Fund. Out of it come the salaries and general expenses of the general officers and staff. The Society also raises money which it turns over to the Church for purposes of education and evangelism.

Foreign Missions Outreach. There are approximately ten thousand young people who are active members of Y. P. M. S. Societies in ten foreign mission fields of the Free Methodist Church. These young people are helping to write what promises to be significant chapters in the Y. P. M. S.'s World Crusade history.³⁴ The Belgian Congo has the largest membership; other fields where the Society flourishes are: Portuguese East Africa, Japan, China, Dominican Republic, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, India, Paraguay and Brazil.³⁵

Areas of Concentration. The Y. P. M. S. has expanded rapidly. Its members are to be found in forty-three conference areas of the Free Methodist Church in North America. According to available statistics forty-one states have Y. P. M. S. societies. Recently two Canadian confer-

³⁴ Annual Conference Minutes (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1952), Supplement, p. 23.

³⁵ Ibid. (1949), p. 378.

ences and one Mexican conference have made some advances toward organizing local societies in their respective areas.³⁶ On the other hand, the greatest area of Y. P. M. S. concentration is the Pittsburg Conference. The East Michigan, Oil City, Washington and Wabash Conferences rank next in order of Y. P. M. S. areas.³⁷

It is still early to write authoritatively of the results of the Charter Plan and the World Youth Crusade. However, indications are that the work of kingdom-building is making solid progress under the impact of this new emphasis of the Y. P. M. S.

III. Y. P. M. S. ACTIVITIES TODAY

In tracing the development of the Young People's Missionary Society of the Free Methodist Church, the writer has intimated that what began as an outlet for youthful expression has developed into an independent, self-sustaining youth movement, a movement out of which the Free Methodist Church has drawn many of its leaders. The present chapter deals with the various major activities being carried on under the auspices of the Y. P. M. S. Some of these have

³⁶ Young People's Missionary Society, It's Time You Knew (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1952), pp. 105-108.

³⁷ Loc. cit.

already been introduced incidentally in the chapter dealing with developments. Y. P. M. S. activities are now discussed more in detail.

Youth Camp. Y. P. M. S. youth camps have been numerous. From the time of the first camp held in Glen Ellyn, Illinois in 1926³⁸ the popularity of the youth camp idea has spread until it has become a part of district, conference, and interconference gatherings. In most cases a youth camp is established and organized like the annual conference camp. It meets each year at the same time and place. Popular camp sites at present are these; the Ozarks, in Arkansas; San Bernardina and Idylwild Pines, California; Palmer Lake, Colorado; Downers Grove and Greenville, Illinois; Clay City, Indiana; Topeka and Goddard, Kansas; Kalamazoo and Vicksburg, Michigan; Kabekonk and Minneapolis Medicine Lake, Minnesota; Turner, Oregon; Alix, Alberta, Canada; and Muskoko and Walsingham, Ontario, Canada.

A camp of distinction is the one for a joint gathering of Free Methodist-Wesleyan Methodist Young People, held at Medicine Lake just outside Minneapolis, Minnesota. This camp first held in July of 1945 as an experiment now meets

³⁸ Carrie Turrell Burritt, The Story of Fifty Years (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1931), p. 196.

annually.³⁹

From 1950 an annual general church youth camp has been held each year at Winona Lake, Indiana. Each of the forty-two church conferences sends representatives to attend the camp. Representation is not limited. The evenings are taken up in rallies. Classes, chapel, workshop periods, methods courses and athletics fill the day-time program for all groups of campers.⁴⁰

Youth Rallies. With the present emphasis on youth and teen-agers, the youth rally has become a popular means of promoting and maintaining interest in youth fellowship. Youth rallies are of the week-end or evening varieties. The personnel of the rally group may include youth from the districts who cooperate in an area rally, or in some cases combine in inter-conference rallies. Because the Wesleyan Methodist church is similar to the Free Methodist Church in doctrinal statement, occasions arise when joint rallies are arranged between contiguous geographical areas of the two churches. The emphases of the youth rallies have been evangelistic or missionary. Daily sessions are

³⁹ Young People's Missionary Society, Y. P. M. S. News (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, September 1, 1945)

⁴⁰ Ibid. (October 1, 1951), Vol. 9, No. 12, p. 1.

usually for the purpose of religious instruction.

In places where Youth for Christ rallies are conducted, Free Methodist young people have cooperated in furnishing speakers and music. Youth for Christ has sponsored European Evangelistic teams from the Free Methodist Church. The young people, usually a team of young married couples, spend their summers in Europe working in the needy areas.⁴¹

Comparable with Youth for Christ is the other "outside" organization working in the field of evangelism, with which the Y. P. M. S. has cooperated -- Holiness Youth Crusades. Many of this movement's crusades have been sponsored by the Free Methodist leadership.⁴²

The Holiness Youth Crusade is to the United States what the Young People's Holiness Association is to Canada. Here, too, youth leaders from Holiness churches are selected for promoting Holiness youth rallies. As the name of the organization implies, emphasis is placed distinctly upon unity in the Spirit through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.⁴³

Southern California has been at the front in organ-

⁴¹ Ibid., May 1, 1950.

⁴² Ibid., May 1, 1949.

⁴³ Light and Life Evangel [Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House], October 4, 1942.

izing conference youth activities in such a manner as to make their regional secretary accessible to all young people in the conference. Through the conference Y. P. M. S. executive committee, the formation of the Christian Youth Progressive Assembly was accomplished. The Regional Secretary and conference officers, forming a "conference caravan," plan in advance an itinerary and notify visiting points of their plan and program. As the name suggests the caravan proceeds from one local organization to another evangelizing conference youth through youth rallies.⁴⁴

Motorcades. Similar in organization to the Christian Youth Progressive Assembly of Southern California is the Motorcade. The Motorcade is conducted throughout the conference. Its planned purpose is instructional, promotional and evangelistic. Dormant societies are reached and stimulated with ideas for activating the Y. P. M. S. In some places, Y. P. M. Societies have not been organized. Visiting such are Motorcade groups, composed of the regional secretary and the conference executive committee, explaining officer duties and giving instruction for the success of Y. P. M. Societies. In each locality evangelistic services are conducted with a

⁴⁴ The Young People's Missionary Society, Y.P.M.S. News [Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House], June 1, 1944.

view to meeting the spiritual needs of the young people. Conferences reporting special benefit from this kind of program are the following: Colorado, Louisiana, Minnesota and Northern Iowa, and Texas. Motorcades in these conferences record extensive travel and has resulted in the recruiting of Y. P. M. S. members and the formation of Y. P. M. Societies.⁴⁵

Crusade Teams. The Crusade Team is an organized team within a local organization with a decided evangelistic outlook. One of the first efforts of the crusade teams in the crusade movement was to reach the high school. It is the function of a team to encourage Christian high school students to organize Bible clubs and prayer groups within high schools in an effort to reach teen-agers.⁴⁶

In addition to local efforts in the high school, district organizations have concentrated their attention on areas which they feel are most ready for revival. An example of an effort of this type is the formation of the Bucklin World Youth Crusade. The locality chosen by the Y. P. M. S. of a West Kansas district conference as most open and ready for evangelism was Bucklin, Kansas. Here

⁴⁵ Ibid., February 10, 1944.

⁴⁶ Ibid., January 1, 1950.

was initiated, in the summer of 1950, an outdoor service campaign. Backing the crusade with their help were the Y. P. M. S. General Superintendent, several of the regional secretaries and an outstanding missionary speaker.⁴⁷

Another type of crusade is the Summer Crusade Volunteers; a group that offers its services to the General Y. P. M. S. headquarters which sends them out in groups to areas where their help is most needed. Summer crusade work consists of helping in Daily Vacation Bible Schools, youth rallies, tent meetings, children's "camps," revival campaigns, house-to-house visitation and personal work. These young people are not concerned primarily with remuneration.⁴⁸

The church denominational colleges have shown their interest in the crusade efforts. Many of their young people volunteer for summer work. In addition to summer contributions, Spring Arbor Junior College, Spring Arbor, Michigan, encouraged by an alumni couple in Brazil, made plans for a second "Spring Arbor" for Christian youth in Brazil. The College pledged itself to the initial task of underwriting the cost of the desired property for the new seminary; and in addition it made plans for sending a two-man crusade team to Brazil in February, 1953.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Ibid., April 1, 1951.

⁴⁸ Ibid., June 1, 1951.

⁴⁹ Ibid., February 1, 1953.

Another active crusade service is the "Prayer Crusade," born, on November 22, 1952, of a group who met in the Free Methodist Church at Clinton, Massachusetts for an annual New England Youth Fellowship. Resulting from this meeting was the formation of a prayer chain for the purpose of praying for a revival in New England.⁵⁰

Crusading youth has not been without training and instruction. During the summer of 1951, a training camp for crusade preparation was held at Winona Lake, Indiana. This training camp featured personal evangelism methods, child evangelism and instructional means for the organization of Youth Crusade Teams.⁵¹ These teams, though of recent origin, are fast becoming a means by which the Y. P. M. S. reaches out from a focal point into a vast number of contiguous areas.

Conferences and Organizations. In 1943 the Y. P. M. S. was received into membership of the youth branch of the National Association of Evangelicals, in which relationship the Society has worked with other evangelical youth groups. This affiliation has meant the widening of Y. P. M. S. influence; it has also proved to be a kind of sounding board

⁵⁰ Ibid., January 1, 1953.

⁵¹ Ibid., October 1, 1952.

by means of which Y. P. M. S. leaders would discover more accurately the needs of world youth.⁵²

Following the World Youth Advance of June, 1947 held in Winona Lake, Indiana, more and more emphasis has been placed upon preparing youth for modern day needs. Young people in important business positions are being given instruction as to their Christian responsibilities, moreover, since this time much has been done toward planning for youth action conferences. The Youth Action Conference leaders are comprised of the general superintendent of the Y. P. M. S. and a member of his office staff.⁵³ These men set up itineraries to include key positions in each conference area, where two-day conferences are to be held. At these times officers receive instruction concerning their particular fields of service and evangelistic objectives to be reached are explained.⁵⁴

Retreats. The retreat has proved to be an effective means for bringing young people together. In each case the retreat has been used to inform Y. P. M. S. officers what measures have been adopted by the Council and what their

⁵² Ibid., November 10, 1943.

⁵³ Ibid., August 1, 1948.

⁵⁴ Ibid., April 1, 1949.

contribution toward those measures should be.⁵⁵ The typical retreat is the week-end conference-type meeting. The retreat program may vary as to the needs of the group. Usually it will include open forum discussions and plans and procedures for accomplishing adopted projects. Local needs are discussed and ideas are exchanged for meeting those needs.⁵⁶

Service Organizations. As previously stated during the years of World War II and through recent years of military preparedness since, the Y. P. M. S. has shown concern for the men in service. Where geographically possible an effort has been made to contact and encourage military men, in training bases to become Christians. In some cases the entertaining of these service men is done in the homes of the young people. Houston, Texas reports a Sunday-type entertainment where men in service are invited to morning church service. Following the morning service the Y. P. M. S. with the young men enjoy a "pot-luck dinner" and after-dinner fellowship in a home which has been selected.⁵⁷ Probably more common is the "service men's center" method

⁵⁵ Ibid., December 1, 1944.

⁵⁶ Ibid., November 1, 1945.

⁵⁷ Light and Life Evangel (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House), September 6, 1942.

of entertainment. Salina, Kansas, for instance, through the leadership and ingenuity of a young pastor opened such a center. This work, has proved to be successful in the ministry of counseling and spiritual instruction. Along with the spiritual emphasis, refreshments and social times are planned by nearby Y. P. M. S. groups.⁵⁸ North Chili, New York reports that a group of airmen, doing basic training at the Samson, New York air base are given special "passes" to accept Thanksgiving dinner invitations made by Y. P. M. S. members.⁵⁹

The IntersVarsity Christian Fellowship, maintained on university campuses for enlisting Christian young men and women, has had the cooperation of Free Methodist young people. The chapter at the University of Washington has cooperated at times with Seattle Pacific College for fellowship and recreation. On the State of Iowa University Campus, a Free Methodist professor, Dr. Harding, has contributed much toward the leadership of the IntersVarsity Christian Fellowship.

Youth Week. Each year the Free Methodist Church

⁵⁸ Young People's Missionary Society, Y. P. M. S. News (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House), July 1, 1943.

⁵⁹ Ibid., January 1, 1953.

along with many other denominations, sets aside a week in January especially dedicated to youth. It is the purpose of Youth Week to do everything possible to improve the local program and reach more youth for Christ. If a local society is showing desirable progress and does not need to use the entire week for self-improvement, it often directs its efforts to helping a nearby local church that does not have a Y. P. M. S.⁶⁰ Youth Week has come to mean many activities. Depending upon the originality of the group, it may include a varied nightly program. The Winona Lake Y. P. M. S., for instance, began with youth-emphasis sermons on Sunday; Monday night brought a "singspiration" service; Tuesday evening was dedicated to Bible study; Wednesday was spent in house-to-house visitation and membership campaign; Thursday night, the young people joined the adults in the weekly prayer meeting; Friday evening a banquet was held for the church youth, and Saturday night, the closing night of youth week, a youth rally was conducted.⁶¹

Three local groups of Y. P. M. S. in the Iowa Conference planned an interesting variation of the youth week program. The week began with a youth fellowship meet-

⁶⁰ Loc. cit.

⁶¹ Ibid., March 1, 1950.

ing at a given church. On following nights other churches shared in entertaining local youth rallies as guests.⁶² Other variations could be cited. Some churches merely hold a special youth night service, others celebrate a youth day when the young people take over official positions in the church. Youth banquets are common. One Canadian Church reported a Youth Festival as the climax of its Youth Week.

In view of all the youth activities of the Free Methodist Church, it is not surprising that many of its adherents consider the Y. P. M. S. to be the life of the church.

IV. PERSONALITIES

The young people's organization of the Free Methodist Church has made many varied contributions both to the church itself and to society at large. The Y. P. M. S. has been a proving ground for future church leaders. Many of its members after passing the age limit of the organization have been almost automatically thrust into responsible church offices.⁶³ The contribution of the Y. P. M. S. in personnel to the mission field, the pastorate, and other fields of Christian service has been very great. It has

⁶² Ibid., April 1, 1949.

⁶³ Ibid., August 1, 1948.

sent out many staff members to military service and to Christian institutions of higher learning. It is a matter of fact that former Y. P. M. S. members now occupy positions of influence which reaches far beyond the boundary of the Free Methodist Church -- in the fields of radio, science, education, and politics.

Rated first place by the National Religious Broadcasters, Incorporated, for four consecutive years (1949-1952) the Church radio broadcast, "The Light and Life Hour," has had as its radio pastor, Dr. Myron F. Boyd, a former Y. P. M. S. member. This program has been released over eleven missionary transmitters, seven Canadian stations, sixteen F. M. Stations and 103 A. M. stations making a total of 137 stations.⁶⁴ Dr. Boyd, an outstanding religious leader, owes some of his success to the training he got in Y. P. M. S. work.

In the field of religious leadership within the youth group of the National Association of Evangelicals are two outstanding Free Methodist Youth leaders, Ernest Keasling and Dale Cryderman, who were formerly ardent Y. P. M. S. executives.⁶⁵ The Reverend Mr. Keasling is known over Free Methodism for his successful leadership and his understand-

⁶⁴ Ibid., June 1, 1952.

⁶⁵ Ibid., November 1, 1944

ing of youth. Mr. Cryderman, a former Y. P. M. S. regional director holds an enviable record for his general contribution to youth of the church.⁶⁶ Another regional director, Charles Kerestly, was elected in 1952 secretary-treasurer of the Evangelical Youth of the National Association of Evangelicals.⁶⁷

In the armed forces, Chaplain Erwin E. Beitelschies was chosen by his superior officers for the Alexander D. Goode award. This award is made annually on the anniversary of the sinking of the *Dorchester*. It includes citation and a cash award. Chaplain Beitelschies is a former active member of the Y. P. M. S.⁶⁸

Dr. Orville S. Walters, another former Y. P. M. S. worker, has made significant contribution to medical science and education. He is listed in American Men of Science, Religious Leaders of America and Who's Who in American Education.

⁶⁶ Young People's Missionary Society, It's Time You Knew (Winona Lake, Indiana: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1952) p. 17.

⁶⁷ Y. P. M. S. News, op. cit., June 1, 1952.

⁶⁸ Y. P. M. S. News, op. cit., June 1, 1952.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The Young People's Missionary Society of the Free Methodist Church has come to be regarded as one of the most important organizations in the life of the Church. Indeed, it is such an integral part of the Church that its dissolution would in the eyes of many mean a very serious set-back for Free Methodism. It is a basic training school for Free Methodist leadership. Through it spiritual life is generated not only to the growing army of the Church's young people, but also to the Church itself. It has assumed certain responsibilities which by virtue of its youthful exuberance it has discharged most commendably.

The Church, as one may well imagine, is heavily indebted to the Y. P. M. S., for the organization's fostering a deep loyalty to the Church.

It is probably true that in few other religious denominations, or for that matter secular organizations, are members so alive with activities. The rather thorough organizational structure of the Y. P. M. S., with its different levels of operation and its numerous outreaches into the life of the world community calls forth our admiration. It is true that much Y. P. M. S. activity necessarily centers around the interests of the young people of the Church

themselves. Yet a significant feature about the Society as a whole is its healthy objectivity of spirit. No doubt this impulse to reach others, which seems, generally speaking, to be characteristic of the group, is a major factor in the rapid expansions of the Society.

The writer feels, however, that while local societies are for the most part aggressive in outreach, a significant number of the smaller "locals" need to be inspired to more aggressive community activity.

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